

THE BEST PREPARATION FOR  
THE CHOLERA :

BEING AN

ADDRESS TO THE INHABITANTS OF LONDON,  
AND OF THE KINGDOM AT LARGE.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

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LONDON :

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LONDON:  
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FELLOW-CITIZENS,—

WE are now scarce beginning to breathe freely again after a succession of shocks, which our commonwealth and the system of social life among us have sustained—a series of trials and distresses falling within a very short period, each of them such as in past times history has seldom, and only at long intervals, had to record. God has pleaded with us by famines and sicknesses, by ruin among our capitalists and want of employment among our labourers, whereby the land has been overspread with a misery, the amount of which we have not adequately conceived, and the details of which we could not bear to contemplate. It has pleased Him, indeed, to preserve us in His mercy from those political convulsions that have brought low so many countries of Europe, overthrowing as in a moment all that they had looked upon as stable and trustworthy. He has preserved to us the blessing of steady government: and He has done so that we might give Him thanks, and might learn to trust, not in forms of government however good, nor in institutions however wise, but in Him—keeping His ways, and desiring His favour. But while God has spared us from the confusion and bloodshed, from the suffering and shame that He has permitted to fall upon so many of the Christian nations, we see the arm of His chastisement under another form stretched out against us still.

For now an evil as alarming, and in its details more severe perhaps and universal than all that has gone before, daily threatens us. A deadly epidemic is making its steady advances from the East. You have read how many victims it has carried off in the cities and countries of Europe, which it has swept over on its way. Already we have the rumour of straggling cases in this city, which, like the few scattered heavy drops of rain that precede the bursting of a summer storm, give us warning of the trial that is at hand. You remember—many of you—its former fearful visitation, and how the boldest hearts trembled before it. Our governors and magistrates are taking such measures of precaution and preparation as their authority can command. Already, many months ago, the bishop of

this diocese, chief spiritual watchman over the city, has urged upon his clergy attention to the circumstances of their several localities. The benevolent have exerted themselves to extend the means and facilities of cleanliness for those who have hitherto been too little able to command them. The public prints are filled with suggestions of the proper medicines and treatment for such as may be attacked by the disease or exposed to it. Our medical men are ready to devote themselves to the sick, and to offer up their lives if it shall be necessary to save our lives or to mitigate our sufferings.

And it becomes every one who regards the well-being of his fellow-men, if he can do anything either to prevent the calamity, or to alleviate it, or to comfort those who fall under it, to do so with his might and timeously.

But, best of all, we shall do a good deed, if we can say anything that will enable you to meet this visitation with a quiet mind, that so you may contentedly submit to it, being neither excited by fear, nor troubled with anxiety, nor driven about by despair, but, when you have made such preparations as the prudent and experienced shall have advised, being able to witness its stroke, or to suffer from it, with calmness, looking with equanimity upon life or death as alike the will of your merciful and reconciled God.

For such visitations as that of which we stand at present in dread are always rendered doubly destructive by an unreasoning panic which goes before, and accompanies them. For one whom the disease has prostrated, you may be sure that two are overcome by the passion of fear. To hinder, or to remedy this panic, were a great national benefit—a saving of human life. But to convert it into cheerfulness and peace were something better still—a worthy object of the highest philanthropy.

Now, it is remarkable enough that the precautionary measures proposed to us, and which all agree in recommending, are summed up in this—cleanness—cleanness of your persons, cleanness of your houses and apartments, cleanness of your streets, courts, and neighbourhoods, removal of all foul and hurtful air, and introduction as much as may be of the pure air of heaven. And the moral precautions are, that you be temperate and sober, avoiding and denying yourselves to every thing that excites, or exhausts, or agitates, living in peace and free from anxiety.

And this bodily and external treatment, and proper posture and condition of the mind, are already a light for us as to the deeper spiritual preparation. Moral cleanness, freedom from guilt, freedom

from hypocrisy and guile, freedom from fear and trouble, cleanness of hands and cleanness of heart, singleness of mind; such is the spiritual preparation for meeting the Divine judgments — as it is written in the Psalms, “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” Ought not then this outward washing in which we are engaged to teach us the necessity of that inward cleansing, whereby, if our repentance do not avert the scourge, it may turn it into a blessing, and its worst event into a deliverance?

But you are looking forward with extreme dread to the arrival of this plague. And the reason of that extreme dread is—you are afraid to die. It is not the pain of it which so alarms you, for it is not more painful than many other diseases; indeed when the shortness of its course is considered, it may be said to be less painful than most. And yet men’s dread of it is extreme. You who live in the crowded metropolis may not have had an opportunity of observing this, for you do not know what your nearest neighbour may be doing or suffering. But in the country towns the real state of men’s minds is more easily unveiled. During the former prevalence of this malady, business was there suspended, the streets were silent and deserted, every one looked at his neighbour with suspicion and alarm; if you went out, being dressed like either a clergyman or a doctor, you were immediately beset by a number of frightened creatures from the houses and corners of the lanes, who were ready to tear you every different way, that you might go and give a word of comfort, or a chance of recovery, to some one dear to them already in the grasp and agonies of death. Some there were who sustained themselves by mere recklessness, brute courage, and shutting of their eyes to the gravity of their circumstances, while others took refuge in the forgetfulness of sensuality; but many hundreds fled. In the country, along the highways you met them, alarmed, doubtful of escape, not knowing whither to run. The villages were shut against them by the authorities. No one was willing to receive them into his house. And when they had made a few miles of distance, they were glad to creep into some barn or shed, where fatigue and agitation brought them a death as summary as that from which they fled.

These people were afraid to die. It was death they were fleeing from; and it is death that you are afraid of; and this fear with the anxiety that springs from it is one of the greatest inlets



of the disease, unnerving men, and shaking them out of their natural powers of resistance.

And why are you afraid to die? Why more just now than at another time? Are you less in God's keeping now than at other times? Those who have studied our fabric can tell us what a wonder every moment of our existence is; how many fibres have to be kept in their places, the least of which, by being over-active or overcharged with blood, is able to fill our frame with agony; how many processes of life and nourishment and breathing and circulation, and others still more minute, beyond our consciousness and control, the stoppage or going wrong of the least of which, even for an instant, is enough to extinguish our mortal life. In the midst of these innumerable hazards, we stand continually on the brink of dissolution, yet by the hand of God are sustained in cheerfulness and in power of vast and varied exertion. Why, then, does cheerfulness now desert you? Is it that the real habitual condition of your mind is made known to you by a fact which compels you to look in the face of a probable death? Thoughts at other times half formed, easily diverted, lurking in the unconscious depths of your spirit, are now let loose upon your unwilling attention. You are habitually, continually, though secretly and unconsciously, living in the fear of death. Amid all your gay enjoyments, and your proud activities, and your foolish boastings, the fear of death is lurking at the bottom of your hearts. Now you are made conscious that it is. And when I say the fear of death, I do not mean to say that it is the distress and weary sufferings of a death-bed that you fear, nor the agonies of dissolution. It is the meeting with God, and the cutting short of your space for repentance, and the sad eternal state which your consciences, already inwardly judging, forewarn you of: these make death formidable.

The fear of death is ever lurking at the bottom of your hearts.

And have you then forgotten that there is One who has died for you and risen again; and that He by death has destroyed him that had the power of death, and delivered them who through fear of death were subject to bondage? Have you not known that the sting of death, and of disease, and of all human ill, is sin, and that He has taken away sin by the sacrifice of Himself? When you were baptised, was it not for remission of sins and the taking away of guilt, and that you might stand before God in the righteousness

of His own well-beloved Son in whom He was well pleased? When you were baptised, was it not that you might possess a life which mortality could not touch, and inherit a kingdom that was well worthy of the sacrifice which you made for its sake, of the pomps and vanities of this world? Was it not that the life or death of the body might be made equal and indifferent to you, because of the unchangeable love of your Heavenly Father, and because of the sure hope that your union with His Son should endure, and that even, though dead, you would live still through the power of His resurrection, and share in the glory of that estate into which He is about to advance us when these bodies shall be raised and fashioned like unto His glorious body? And were not you continually called to partake of the food of that eternal life in the assurance of Him who says, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me?"

And yet the fear of death is always lurking at the bottom of your hearts.

Then it is plain that you *have* forgotten these things. You should have been blessing God and giving Him thanks for these things, but you have forgotten them. You should have been worshipping God, blessing Him, and giving Him thanks for His love and goodness. You should have been living in cheerfulness and freedom before God, as glad children with a kind father, glad to make known to Him your wants, glad to know His will, sure of His guidance, confident of His causing all things to work together for your good, patient of His chastenings, submissive to His discipline, observing the rules and order of His holy house, waiting for the glorious end by which He will fulfil and far surpass all His promises. But instead, you have thought of God and been troubled, you have shrunk from Him as a Judge, you have feared Him as an enemy. You have been at ease only then when He and all His words and deeds were most entirely cast out from your thoughts.

And why has it been thus with you? From some want of grace on God's part? There was not anything He could do for you that He did not do. He came before all your necessities. No sooner were you born a mortal and inheritor of a curse, than He waited upon you with immortality. Baptism for remission of sins, the laver of regeneration was there. You were ignorant and in darkness: did He not give you teachers? But, perhaps, you were too proud to be a little child and to sit as a disciple. You

were fallible : did He not give you pastors ? But, perhaps, you were too proud and filled with a false shame, so that you would not tell the troubles and sieknesses of your hearts, your temptations, and falls, and defilements, that with Divine salves and balsams your pastors might heal and restore you again. You were exposed to the subtle temptations of spiritual enemies, and you felt the counsel and the reproofs of the Holy Ghost who was given you, but unfortunately—ay, most wickedly—you disregarded them.

God's intention was, that, being made a child of God and heir of eternal life, you should go on, and grow up and serve God, inereasing in the knowledge of His will, and in skill and strength to perform it. But you have not kept God's intention in view ; you have not gone on ; you have not forgotten the things that were behind by pressing on to those that were before, but you have forgotten the things that were behind by neglecting and losing sight of those which were before. You have lost sight of God's intention in His children, and have chosen independently for yourselves,—chosen, through curiosity perhaps that would try all things, through the example of others, or their persuasion, or their violence, it may be, for God knows all those sad deviees of Satan, and He weighs your temptations, and eompassionates you accordingly. Having lost sight of God's intention in you, you added not to your faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperanee, and patience, and godliness, and brotherly-kindness, and charity ; and, therefore, have come upon you that darkness and doubt about God's merey, and those hard despairing thoughts of God, and that seemingly irresistible power of sin, before which you are swept along into all evil. Some, thus fallen away from God, are by cireumstanees hindered, or by certain advantages sustained, or by the grace of God prevented, from reaching the darkest of those depths to which their courses tend ; but others—multitudes—sink into defilements where human merey has no will to follow them, into depths not of fleshly evil alone but of spiritual evil. For you should know that the possibility of attainments in sin is ever proportional to the possibility of attainments in good. Has any one been brought near to God ? just so far has he received an ability of departing from Him. Is any one made a son ? it has become possible for him to be so much the more His enemy. A man must be a disciple and a friend before he can be a traitor. Has any one received the Holy Ghost ? so much more can he, if he follow not God's intention, but an intention of his own, be indwelt and energised by spirits of wickedness.



Well; thus we find you living in divers lusts and pleasures, — living in selfishness, envy, hatred, in slavery and bondage to him out of whose hands the Son of God had redeemed you—destroying yourselves and one another: some preserving a staid, respectable exterior; some falling into madness and under diabolical possessions. Some have so far lost sight of God and His intentions, that they embrace the fallacious promises of those who say they ought to have bread without the sweat of their brow; and that industry shall not be better off than idleness; and that God shall not bless one man's substance and labour of his hands more than another man's; and that a good father shall not lay up for his children, nor his children inherit his riches; and that God shall not any longer lift up one and cast down another; and that it belongs to the people to rule over their kings, and to judge their judges. To this pitch of blindness they are come, this credulity to falsehood. And having thus removed or lost the first stone of that fabric of Revelation which made intelligible man's position and his lot endurable, they lay themselves open to every suggestion that the wickedest heart can entertain or the prince of the devils can whisper.

It is a sorry sight to look upon. For these are God's sons and daughters, the children of the kingdom, who were made heirs of the kingdom of Heaven. Oh! for a voice of love that could reach them from their Father's house! Oh! for a hundred hands to pull them up out of the mire! Oh! for divine charity that might move the bowels of the Church toward her own children! Let us not say they are inaccessible, or that they would not hear. Among them are the weary and heavy-laden to be found, to whom a word of divine love will be as the sight of water is to a pilgrim in the desert. The physician despises not the sick, but in hope waits upon them. What is become of our bowels and mercies?

What are ye doing, ye comfortable Christians, — ye respectable church-going worshippers, — ye ninety-nine righteous, that need no repentance? Are ye doing nothing for your poor, wounded, sick, deceived, and cruelly-enslaved brethren? Do you not think of their wretchedness, when you feel with what contentment and spiritual sufficiency God has surrounded you? Or are your hearts steeled with that prudery that can see error only, and the repulsiveness of vice—as if you had not yourselves also been conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity—and which withholds you from sympathising with them as brethren, and from ministering help, and declaring to them the Divine forgiveness? See that you do not

testify against yourselves while you condemn them. If you are righteous, you have been made so, not by being passed by, abhorred of your fellow-sinners, and left in ruin, but by being visited, and suffered for, and washed, and comforted by One who came down from Heaven, by the Son of God come from the purity and the glory of His Father's bosom. What strange insensibility has grown upon you? Where is the washing of one another's feet? You live in the midst of them, hearing and seeing them, conscious that they are destroying themselves—knowing that your Saviour is their Saviour also; and can you forbear crying out to God for help? And where you can in nothing, by word or deed, stay them or recover them, at least entering daily into your churches, and presenting them before Him to whose family they belong.

And is it God's family upon which our eyes are looking? Are these wretched, and vile, and debased, and enslaved ones His children? They were once made so, and He has not spoken and said, "Ye are not My people." They know Him not. True. They are strangers and fatherless, because they know not themselves, nor their Friend, nor their Father's house. But they do belong to Him. Not by redemption only, as all men do, but by union to His Church, by being members of His Son and born again of His Holy Spirit. The prodigal son was as really his father's son as the elder brother was, as dear to his father's heart, as truly beloved and longed for. These prodigals, with all their riotous living and their dark ignorance, are of the family of God, beloved of God, longed for as such; and they who would call them brethren, and who long over them as brethren, they have the mind of Christ.

Well; men, Christian men, are in this state,—Christian men in this land, where the light of God has been most free to shine, and His words have been abundant, and His ordinances unhindered by superstition.

And a pestilence is at our doors: not, so to speak, a disease, but a visitation of Death; and those who are recovered out of it are rescued as out of death itself. Not a disease, such as has remissions, and comes on gradually, without immediately impairing the mind or suspending reflection, giving room for meditation, and for warnings and exhortations, for calling upon God in quietness, and for stirring up the faith that is hidden in the heart. Not so: but under this plague, no sooner does it commence than your whole energies are employed in grappling with it. You can think of nothing but the agony, and the alarm, and the labour of using reme-

dies and applications, and are full of an anxious calculation of the chances of death or of recovery. That is no favourable time even for the reflections of the prodigal, still less for his resolution and his acts. How shall you, under such circumstances, suddenly feel the unwonted sense of a godly sorrow, which flows from an assurance of your Father's love? Much more probably your anguish will be redoubled by dismay, and the horror of sinking into a condition where no Saviour's arm can ever-reach you. Your friends stand around you there, loving you as their own souls,—their bowels yearning over you—but they can help neither body nor soul. There is nothing in the wide world that can help you. You are already alone with your God. You have often meant to make, as you say, your peace with Him; but you never did. And the knowledge that even now might avail you, you possess not, for you have been unwilling to receive instruction. You know not that He loves you; and you are unable to cast yourselves upon His mercy. There is nothing you would not willingly do, no sacrifice you would not willingly make, no present pain you would not undergo, to ensure even your bodily recovery; still more, if anything could be thought of to make you stand safely before your Judge, with what earnestness you would employ your few remaining moments—the swiftly-ebbing pulses of your hearts in the doing of it! You would give the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul. You would do this. But, because you have long shut your ears to the voice of God, you are now unable to hear Him say, “I have found a ransom;” “In Me is thy help found;” “My Son hath died for thee;” “Your sins are as scarlet, but they shall be white as snow.” This, and far more, He does say, but you are unable to hear Him. Sorrow without comfort,—peril without hope,—huge dread looking out upon a dark eternity,—pangs of the mind more consuming than the body's agony,—self-accusation, remorse,—these things gather around your sick bed, themselves accelerating your end. Whereas, were you already living in that peace which God has made for you through the blood of His own Son, and able through faith of His forgiveness and adoption to look upon Him as your Friend and in all things your Saviour,—then see with what quiet courage you could await that visitation, and in what peace you could lay yourself down under the scourge of your Heavenly Father, cheerfully doing all that was advised in the way of remedy, because it is a man's duty to prolong his life, yet marking undismayed the advances of your malady and the waning of



the strength of your flesh, ready to surrender your spirit unto Him who gave it, as unto a faithful Creator. And for your friends, should you depart, shall it not be more than consolation, even joy and triumph over an enemy, if they have seen you to be, through faith in God, ready for either issue? And, should you be the healthy one, and some of them the smitten, what courage should not you have to wait upon them, and to comfort them in the hour when their heart and flesh fail, because for you to live were Christ, while death itself would shine to you by the light of the Resurrection!

The disease marches on steadily towards us. While we speak it travels across the sea, and is wafted to us on the breeze. And before our eyes, in this city, with its *two millions* of souls, God's children are, as we have said, living in this distance from God, and opposition to Him, unclean and unprepared to meet His judgment. A cry of wickedness, such as provoked the flood, rises up, like a steam, from our streets. Men's consciences are prepared to justify God's rebuke: but their hearts are not prepared to trust Him under it. The fear of death is lurking at the bottom of their hearts.

And shall no preparation be made? Are we become brutish? Shall we cleanse our streets and leave our consciences uncleansed? Shall we yield to the instructions of our rulers, and stir up all our invention, and give freely of our money that every alley and every habitation may be ventilated and disinfected; and shall we not open our ear to the Divine call? Oh yes! let us call upon Him while He is near; let us take with us words and return unto the Lord. Let us say unto Him, "Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously."

For this it is of which we stand in need. Cleanness, innocence, peace with God, assurance of His love, hope of glory and triumph to be brought unto us at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

You cannot make yourselves innocent. Your history cannot be obliterated. You must ever remain the persons who once lived thus or thus, and who did this thing or the other. You must eternally be those who did break God's law; who did not believe His word, or trust Him, or love Him; who did not keep the vow of their baptism; who resisted, quenched, despised the Holy Ghost. For ever it will remain true that you offended God, and that your sins cried out for punishment.

But God has pitied us—He has no pleasure in our destruction. He would have all men to repent and be saved. Therefore He



speaks to you thus: "I have blotted out thy transgressions as a thick cloud, and as a cloud thy sins." The Son of God has loved you. He became a man because of His love to you. He was born of a human mother. For more than thirty years He lived among men, a poor man, like you in weariness and temptation, under the burden of mortality,—worse off than most of you, for He had not where to lay His head. He suffered, being tempted in all points as you are—suffered so grievously, that with strong crying and tears that man made his complaint to God. But no evil was found in Him. He was thereby proved to be the innocent one—the spotless man. And God laid your guilt upon that innocent one, and required your debt at His hand. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He did bear that load of our sin, and He sank under it into death. He lay in death. Our guilt did bring the Son of God into real death. But when our guilt could do no more, God looked down and beheld His Son, and was satisfied. It was enough for the sins of the whole world. And He raised Him from the dead. He said of us, that we were bought with that blood, and He pronounced peace upon us. And He who descended for you to the grave is now Lord over all, at the right hand of power; Lord over death itself, Dispenser of grace and forgiveness. He takes away your guilt and gives you peace with God. You cannot have the innocence of never having sinned, but you receive from Him the guiltlessness of the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is blotted out, and to whom the Lord imputeth not sin. Let the pride of your heart be bowed, then, and confess that you are a sinner, and be content with mercy, and think no more of making your own peace, but see God making peace by the death of His own Son. He asks only that you confess your sin.

Say not, "Such grace is incredible; my sins are so heinous and so numerous, and I have been so obstinate in them, and have so often hardened my heart against God, and have derided Him and blasphemed Him." Can any grace be incredible in Him who refused not to exchange the glory of heaven for the loathsomeness of the tomb, and all to bear and blot out that sin of yours. He was put to death by men; and what did He say of His murderers? "Go, and preach to them repentance and remission of sins." There was a proud and headstrong young man, who so hated Christ that he undertook to pursue and slay all who believed in Him. In his bloody zeal he procured letters from the chief priests, that he might go from city to city and force them to blaspheme Christ or

die. What did the Lord do to that young man? He met him on his way, in the midst of his wicked thoughts, when there was no repenting, no change of purpose. He met him in the way, and—say you, He spake to him in His anger, and the earth swallowed him up? Not at all. He spake to him gently, He gave him counsel: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” He allowed him to speak; “Who art thou, Lord?” and He told him who He was, and sent him to one who could both restore his eye-sight and declare to him the great peace which His blood had bought: and He made that young man the Apostle of the Gentiles, sending through him down even to us the gospel of forgiveness. Such is He whom you are reluctant to trust. Make no more difficulties, I pray you. Raise not up an imaginary barrier, where the Son of God has by death removed the real barriers. Accept the forgiveness of your sins. He who suffered for you says, “Be ye reconciled unto God.” He sent His Apostles to say this to all men. He gave them the Holy Ghost, that they might in His name, and as His hands, dispense this grace to all men. And He has His messengers and dispensers of grace still, who wait to receive you when you turn towards Him, and to minister His forgiveness to you all.

But perhaps you say, “These exhortations were addressed to persons who had never yet been cleansed by baptism, and who, therefore, were incapable of that sin of which we have been guilty who have known God’s ways and have departed from them,—who have stood in the grace of God and been made His children and yet have departed from Him.” How, then, I pray you, did God deal with His people under the former covenant? Did He not say to them, “Return unto Me;” “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help found;” “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.” His very name is, “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and slow to anger, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.” Many times He repented for them, and returned with mercies. Such was His character and such His way with them. And His heart is the same now. True, you cannot be baptised anew. But it is also true,—most true, and to be declared without drawback or qualification, that the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient for the blotting out even of sins after baptism. Is it not of sinning Christians that St. John is speaking when he says, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

the righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins,"—even for the sins of us who have sinned after baptism? St. John is speaking of sinning Christians when he says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The guilt is aggravated indeed, and the shame more humbling, but the mercy enlarges itself even to this. St. James speaks to sinning Christians, and tells them to confess their faults one to another, and to pray for one another, that they may be forgiven; and he says that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and that if he have committed sin it shall be forgiven him. And St. Paul tells the Church to restore them that fall, in the spirit of meekness. Let not man nor Satan persuade you that the Gospel provides only a difficult forgiveness to those now found in sin in the bosom of the Church. The difficulty lies all on your own side, not on God's side. If you do not honestly wish to leave off your sins, there is the difficulty, for God heareth not hypocrites. But every broken-hearted one He hears and saves.

But, perhaps, you fear you shall not be able to leave off your sins. You fear to engage with this new life of holiness, because you know how frail you are, and that you shall probably come far short of it and fall into the snares of your old sins again. You say, "We have often in past times vowed and resolved, and we have thereby always added broken resolutions to our former discouragements, and broken vows to our former sins." Well, the fear is most natural. But I do not ask you to trust the future to yourselves, I wish you to forget yourselves, and to trust the future to Him who died for you and who rose again. Can you suppose that God saved you thus far at such an incalculable expense as the blood of His own Son, and that He will leave the work there? Shall Almighty strength begin a work, and the perfecting of it be left to the weakness of a worm? Has God no remaining resources of wisdom and power, and does forgiveness exhaust all His grace? Truly in that case it had been all in vain. But He knew what He undertook. He knew how weak you were, and yet He undertook your salvation; and He has made full provision for it. Jesus will not quit that work until He have presented you faultless before the throne of God. All your past experience is of yourselves. Now begins for you the experience of what God can do. All your past experience is of the weakness of the flesh; now you must expect to learn the strength of the Spirit. Till now you have, through unfaithfulness, known only what it was to be one with the fallen



Adam, while you should have been feeling what it was to be one with the Lord from heaven. Hitherto you have stood alone, and have fallen ;—alone, for you believed not that you had been joined to another—now you must know yourself for a member of Christ, part of that body in which dwells the Holy Ghost, and all whose members are helpers one of another, and have a care one of another. You have proved the weakness of your own resolutions; now trust them no longer, but prove the efficacy of the Divine ways and ordinances. You have neglected these; you have not approached God by them; you have not expected strength, recovery, and healing through them. You have not used the holy table of Communion, nor known what it is to live on the body and blood of Christ. You have not used your pastors as God's guides and comforters. But instead, have thought to grow strong without spiritual food, and healthy without spiritual medicine, and to bear all your falls, and wounds, and sorrows, with none to lift you up or to comfort you. And the spirit of bondage, and of fear, and of labour, has weighed you down, instead of the spirit of children and the law of liberty. Therefore I say, your past experience may instruct, but it must not discourage you.

But it may be that you are afraid—having been so great a sinner, being withal so conscious of your own inability to walk in all well-pleasing before God—you are afraid to allow yourself in such confidence and faith, and with this familiarity and love of a child continually to come near to your Heavenly Father. Is there, then, any thing more well-pleasing to God than to believe what He has said, to accept the mercy that He has offered, and to take the place which He has conferred upon you? To love God is to obey the commandment. Does a child love his father, if he will not come near to him, if he shrinks from sitting at his table, if he do not flee to him when afraid or in danger, if he do not freely ask him for what he wants, and open his whole heart to him? Or is God's reconciliation partial, dubious, limited? Does He still remember the past, or has He really blotted it out? Why, the very sea is as calm when the storm is over as if there had never been a storm to ruffle it. When the sun shines out again, it shines as though there had never been a cloud to obscure it. Let Nature teach and reassure you. The death of the Son of God was real, and its results are real. The fall was real, and you have felt it to be so. You have groaned under the reality of that. The redemption is as real as the fall. Your new condition is as real as the former was—real—



complete. 'Tis not something that doubtfully, and from day to day, balances itself between two. It retains no element of the former condition. You are not partly to take courage because of forgiveness, and partly to be discouraged as though unforgiven. You honour not God by grudging His mercy for Him. You honour God by giving Him thanks, by confiding in Him, by pouring out before Him your whole hearts, and in the name of Jesus your Mediator coming with boldness to a throne of grace.

And, if such a word as this, when spoken to you as one of a multitude, or when read by you thus out of a book, does not bring the grace of God near enough to yourself as an individual; then go and open your heart to your pastor, ask him to pour out your confession, to help your supplications, and to let you hear the voice of Divine mercy addressed to yourself. Or if you have no pastor, find a friend, and let him see the wounds and sores of your hearts, and pour into them the oil and the wine. Or if in the midst of this crowded city you be so desolate that you cannot find even such a friend, then wait in patience. Above all things, avoid impatience, "amazement," and despair. Wait, for has not God been patient? Wait, and ask of Him who sent a messenger of mercy to the affrighted Saul, saying, "Go to him, for behold he prayeth," and He will bring to you a messenger who shall declare to you His mercy, and dispense His recovering grace. Man cannot forgive sin. But Jesus can — by men. He sent His Apostles to preach repentance and remission of sins, and thereby to bring many to ask forgiveness. He gave them this message to deliver, but He gave them power also to forgive in His name; "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted." And that message has come down to us through men, His messengers, who now deliver it. And the forgiveness has come down too. The one would be a mockery without the other. Through His servants, now also He dispenses His forgiveness. Through their word, ye may believe and be forgiven. Through their word, addressed to your own ear, to your own heart, concerning your own case, shall you learn that God has loved you also, even you. You may hear the gracious words, "Thy sins be forgiven thee for Jesus Christ's sake — peace be with thee."

And with that hearing, health shall flow into thy soul. Thou shalt stand up upon thy feet, and be a man once more. Then shalt thou be able to look upon thy sins and to see their enormity. Then shalt thou be able to listen to the word of God, and to hear all that He shall declare unto thee; or rather thou shalt forget

thyself, and be but one among the many thousands of His forgiven, recovered children, through whom His name shall be glorified.

I have dwelt too long and too exclusively on the topics which address themselves to those who are conscious of their state and who are afraid of God. There are others whose consciences give them no trouble. I must leave them to be addressed by some other of our spiritual heralds. But, on the other side, there are I believe many who are living in such hearty faith and assurance of God's love and mercy, that their anxiety arises, not from unwillingness to be themselves cut off and removed from this life, but from a desire to live that they may discharge existing obligations, and may duly care for and protect those who are dependent upon them. "I have," you say, "a wife and children, who, should I be removed, will be thrown into great difficulties and distresses, defenceless and unprovided for in the world." Very well, it is a good and natural reason for wishing not to die; and God is your Father, and He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. You are at liberty to present to God your request that He would spare you. In Jesus Christ you have the privilege of a son, and may ask Him to spare you for this reason. King Hezekiah was sick unto death; the word of God declared to him that his time was come, to die; nevertheless, he desired to live, and he turned himself on his bed and prayed. God permitted him to present his request; and He granted him his request, and added to his days fifteen years. In like manner may you present your petition, and that too, with far more assurance, because you are members of the body of Him who is risen from the dead. God will not be offended by your asking; nay, you may send for the elders of the Church, as St. James directs, that they may lay their hands upon you, and anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and you shall glorify Him.

But are we to sit down with folded hands and say, "This evil cannot be averted?" Are we reasonable men, believing in our Creator, and knowing that He guides and rules over all things, or do we believe in a blind fate and iron destiny? The very heathen were not so brutish as to reckon anything inevitable that God could remove. They flocked to the temples which they had, and offered such sacrifices as they could think of, and called upon their Maker with loud cries and supplications. In old time a stranger came to a great city, and he cried through their streets, "Yet three days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Hearing, the inha-

bitants were afraid. They knew little of God ; but they knew enough to assure themselves that He was the Hearer of prayer : and they fasted all of them, the king and all the people, and God had mercy upon them, and He falsified the words of His own prophet—rather than verify them by the destruction of the city. And shall not we do at least as much as they ? Shall not we go as a people and make our supplications to God ? Does not God look with pity down upon this vast multitude of men, as He sees the hour of their visitation approach them ? Does not He look with pity upon us, upon our family circles, upon our tender offspring, and upon our ignorant multitudes who know not their right hand from their left ? Does He not tarry for us and stay the destroying angel's hand—hearkening for our prayers—looking, while He sends tokens and premonitions of judgment, to see if we will repent and turn from our wicked ways ? And are there not our numerous churches, some of which are daily open, and all of which would be, if the people longed for the privilege, that we might come together as a people and make our supplications to Him ? Let us do this. With broken hearts let us pour forth our fears and sorrows, and that not selfishly, but in sympathy with one another ; not in fortuitous crowds, but in orderly assemblies under our heads and spiritual rulers ; not with the irregular bursts of a desperate grief, but with the decency and calmness of reasonable men believing in Him on whom they call. And if some stand aloof and are impenitent, let them not be excluded from our petitions. Let us remember how Abraham pleaded for Sodom, and persevere as he did. Who knows if God will return and repent and spare us all, and send forth His Spirit, that we may be revived, and that our city may become a believing and a holy city, from the midst of which healing and salvation might go forth again to many regions of Christendom ?

